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# IRANIAN PAYMENTS STEERED TO OTHERS

## U.S. Aides Think Afghans and Angolans Got Some Money

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1 — Senior Reagan Administration officials, saying that the Nicaraguan rebels have received less aid than reported by the Attorney General, suggested today that some of the money from arms sales to Iran might have been diverted to anti-Communist rebel groups in other countries.

In voicing this suspicion, the officials said the Nicaraguan rebels had received far less in aid from all sources in the last year than Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d has said was diverted to them from the sales to Iran.

Although some state Department and other Administration officials say they do not know where the rest of the money went, several Government officials said they believed some of the Iranian money might have been diverted to rebel groups like those in Angola and Afghanistan.

Last Tuesday, Mr. Meese said from \$10 million to \$30 million in profits from the United States weapons sales to Iran was channeled to the rebels.

Today, however, Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, said the Nicaraguan rebels were "clearly broke" after the \$27 million in nonlethal aid approved by Congress ran out last spring. "They had no cash and had substantial debts" by July, he said.

"In their main hospital," he added, "they were washing and re-using bandages."

Contra leaders and other officials said initially that they believed the Iranian money might have been used to pay for the covert program directed by National Security Council officials to airdrop arms to the rebels, and Mr. Abrams said he had no views on that.

But after analyzing details of that supply program over the last week, two senior Administration officials directly involved in the matter said today that the contra supply programs had clearly not cost as much as \$10 million. The contras "just haven't seen anything like \$10 to \$30 million in military help," a senior Administration official involved in the matter said.

### 'No Way,' Pilot Says

A former contract pilot who said he had flown numerous covert supply missions to the contras until one of the planes crashed inside Nicaragua in October said in an interview today that he agreed with that assessment.

The pilot, William K. Wehrell, whose home telephone number in Florida appeared in phone records from a "safe house" in El Salvador that was used by contra military supply teams, said the airdrop program was impoverished. "There's no way," he said, that the program could have used between \$10 million and \$30 million.

"The whole thing was incredibly poorly funded from the very beginning," Mr. Wehrell said. "We couldn't even buy navigational systems so we could accurately make the drops to the right people."

Mr. Wehrell said he was to be interviewed by United States Government investigators about his role in the program in the next few days.

Several officials said the military supply program probably cost \$3 million to \$4 million over the last year, but they added that the estimate was rough. In addition to the \$10 million to \$30 million Mr. Meese said was channeled to the contras, rebel leaders have said they received \$2 million to \$3 million in donations from private individuals, a figure State Department officials say is probably accurate.

### 'Fragmentary Evidence'

As to the question of where the extra money went, a senior Government official who has read key intelligence reports from the last year said that "there's some fragmentary evidence" in those reports that some of the Iranian money was also used "to fund other projects."

Although the official declined to specify which projects, he and other officials implied that some of the Iranian money might have been used to help finance the rebel movements in Afghanistan and Angola.

That tentative conclusion, they said, was based on reviews over the last several days of highly classified files of communications intercepted and recorded from a variety of sources by the National Security Agency.

In February, President Reagan authorized a covert program to provide

up to \$15 million in aid to the guerrillas fighting the Marxist Government in Angola. For several years, the United States has also been providing covert aid to the rebels fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

A knowledgeable official said the idea that some of the Iranian money was channeled to other rebel groups was gaining wider acceptance among senior Government officials as more of them read the National Security Agency intercepts and also analyze the available data on the total cost of covert arms shipments to the Nicaraguan rebels.

Mr. Abrams and others in the State Department have said they did not know any Iranian money was being diverted to the rebels until Mr. Meese discussed the matter during a news briefing last week.

Mr. Wehrell, the contract pilot, said he worked for William J. Cooper, the pilot who died when a C-123 transport crashed inside Nicaragua in October while carrying rifles and ammunition to rebel troops. Mr. Wehrell said that "the people involved in running the operation were trying to save money from the very beginning."

He said the airdrop program began last February and added that he flew missions until the program was suspended in October, after the crash.

Mr. Wehrell said he did not know the source of the program's money but added, "There's no way it cost anything near \$10 to \$30 million."